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Letter dated 16 August 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Jorge Sampaio, has submitted to me his fifth annual report highlighting the main activities carried out from July 2011 to July 2012 in accordance with the third implementation plan (2011-2013) and the addendum thereto, which set out the agenda of the Alliance for the period covered and defined concrete initiatives to be carried out.

The Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005 under the auspices of the United Nations, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey. Its aim is to promote the agenda of good governance of cultural diversity at both the global and local levels and to help counter divisions, polarization and extremism within and among societies.

Now in its fifth year of operation, the Alliance is the leading initiative dealing with the polarization, transitions and dilemmas of our current time. Its relevance is further underscored by recent events and headlines. At the end of a decade of great challenges, I remain convinced of the usefulness of the innovative work carried out by the Alliance as a platform to bring together a unique constellation of partners at all levels, committed to harnessing the resources of cultural diversity for peace and development.

The international community continues to provide the Alliance with broad political support, and the Alliance's Group of Friends now numbers 133 members. By its resolution 64/14 of 10 November 2009, the General Assembly expressed its support for the Alliance. I look forward to more countries joining the Group of Friends and actively supporting the Alliance, including financially. In this regard, I should like to underscore the importance of the replenishment mechanism which now complements the voluntary Trust Fund of the Alliance. I trust it will offer a further platform for sustained, diversified and regular support for the initiatives of the Alliance.

I also note that good progress has been made in planning for the Vienna Forum, to be hosted by the Government of Austria on 27 and 28 February 2013,

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which is expected to raise the visibility of the Alliance and enhance political commitment to its goals. I am pleased that the Vienna Forum will focus mainly on the theme "Responsible leadership in diversity and dialogue", one of the key topics of our time for many different reasons. I look forward to taking part in the Forum.

I should be grateful if you would bring the report to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

Alliance of Civilizations: fifth annual report of the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations

Summary

The present report highlights the main activities carried out by the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations and his secretariat from July 2011 to July 2012. The activities were developed in accordance with the third implementation plan for 2011-2013 submitted to the Secretary-General in August 2011, as well as its addendum, taking stock of the outcomes of the Fourth Global Forum, held in Qatar in December 2011. Both plans are aimed at implementing, in a changing world, the recommendations proposed in the founding report of the High-level Group on the Alliance of Civilizations.

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I. Introduction

1. The Alliance of Civilizations is a political initiative of the Secretary-General. It was launched in 2005 with the co-sponsorship of the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey. Based on the recommendations of a report submitted by a High-level Group in November 2006,[1] the Secretary-General appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as his High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. Since May 2007, President Sampaio has been in charge of achieving the Alliance's mission by setting up a functional framework for action, developing an agenda and building up a network of stakeholders.

2. Tolerance and respect among human beings in all diversities of belief, culture and language are fundamental values at the core of the Alliance. The Alliance aspires to the ideal of a culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations on the assumption that, as stated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (see General Assembly resolution 55/2), "Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity."

3. The primary mission of the Alliance is to forge collective political will and to mobilize concerted action at the institutional and civil-society levels aimed at improving understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and, in the process, help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. The Alliance's particular focus is on improving relations within and among the so-called Western and Muslim societies, and on addressing persistent tensions and divides.

4. The Alliance occupies a unique niche within the United Nations family. It is an innovative, flexible, results-oriented initiative based on partnerships and commitments to action made by a wide range of stakeholders.

5. During the reporting period, a new step forward was taken to consolidate the Alliance's sustainability, independence, autonomy and credibility as a multi-stakeholder initiative through the implementation of a new replenishment mechanism and the creation of a Partners Assembly made up of a diverse range of donors.

6. The present report is the High Representative's fifth annual report. It highlights the main activities carried out from July 2011 to July 2012, in accordance with the third implementation plan (2011-2013), complemented by the major outcomes of the Fourth Global Forum in Doha in December 2011 (which are integrated into an addendum to the third implementation plan, presented in March 2012).

II. Overview of progress

7. During the past year, the Alliance continued to consolidate and expand as one of the most relevant global platforms for intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation. It delivered on its objectives through a range of activities, including

[1] *Alliance of Civilizations: Report of the High-level Group*, 13 November 2006 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.I.11).

several cross-cutting projects, which are presented in section IV. The present section puts them into perspective, discussing progress made over the past year against the backdrop of a changing world marked by increasingly demanding challenges related to the Alliance's vision and mission.

8. As a political initiative addressing sensitive questions at the juncture of domestic concerns, national interests, regional balances and world politics, the Alliance is progressing amid a number of challenges, dilemmas and shortcomings.

9. The year 2011 marked the tenth anniversary of the events of 11 September 2001. Surveys show that Muslim and Western publics continue to see relations between them as generally bad, and both sides hold negative stereotypes of the other. Surveys also show that tensions and mistrust still dominate West-Muslim relations.

10. Events and controversies related to racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, including discrimination against persons based on their religion or belief and incitement to hate, persist in many parts of the world and were prominent in mainstream media during the reporting period.

11. Together, those two sets of facts make it clear that the primary mission of the Alliance and its particular focus must be given equal priority in its activities, and be preserved as the two main defining features of the Alliance.

12. Actions carried out during the reporting period aimed at striking the right balance between the two dimensions of the Alliance and to overcome what in the third implementation plan is identified as the coherence challenge. Efforts were made through the year to foster stronger links between national plans, regional strategies and programmes developed by the Alliance, set up with or through its partners. That was reflected in preparatory work for the Second Action Plan for South-Eastern Europe and the draft Latin America Strategy. Furthermore, extra efforts were made to expand and anchor the Alliance's work in new regions, namely in Asia and Africa. Cross-cutting activities, including various multi-stakeholder initiatives, public campaigns and the Intercultural Innovation Awards, helped create synergies and exploit untapped resources.

13. Because 2011 was a historic year for the Middle East and North Africa region as social and political transformations in many countries created unprecedented opportunities for change, the Alliance was involved in a number of activities, largely within the framework of its Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean. Conferences in Cairo in July 2011 and the annual Lisbon Forum co-organized with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe in November 2011 focused on sharing experiences in democratic transition and addressed a number of critical issues. Media owners, who convened at the Dead Sea in Jordan in October 2011, reviewed risks and agreed on responsibilities. The Doha Forum discussed with key actors the transforming role of youth, and both the power and the limits of social networks. Democratically elected governments face defining issues of securing political participation, tolerance and realization of universal human rights, including religious freedom and freedom of expression. Sharing experiences from different environments remains high on the agenda.

14. One important role for the Alliance amid increasingly global diversity, multiple emerging versions of modernity and a much more politically diverse landscape is to promote dialogue and pluralism to encourage consensus at global,

regional, national and local levels. In the international and regional arena, that means understanding that democratization does not necessarily signify Westernization and that, as is already being witnessed in the Middle East, more democracy may well mean more political Islam. At the same time, in a democracy, respect for human rights, pluralism and the toleration of political and ideological diversity are non-negotiable.

15. In this new context, the Alliance is increasingly focused on the influence of religion on peace, security and development. Building on the outcomes and recommendations of previous initiatives on freedom of expression, religion and conscience, religious diversity, religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2010; Cordoba, Spain, 2010; Lisbon, 2010; Florence, Italy, 2011), as well as on several recommendations on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial and religious hatred, the Alliance addressed topical issues at the Doha Forum, such as the need for education on tolerance, intercultural skills and competence; new tools for building consensus and making cultural diversity an asset; and rising restrictions of the freedom of religion and the protection of minorities. The issue of respect for religious diversity will again be on the agenda of the Fifth Forum in Vienna in 2013. Notably, the Alliance also contributed to the success of the second observance of World Interfaith Harmony Week, celebrated in February 2012.

16. In 2011, the world continued to experience instability due to the enduring economic crisis. Economic uncertainty helped generate social and political unrest of varying degrees in many urban areas. Protests in numerous North American and Western European cities have been largely peaceful. But clashes — and, in places, civil war — have broken out in other regions and tensions have arisen in many parts of the world.

17. As a result of the economic downturn on the continent, European societies are facing persistent difficulties in addressing their growing cultural diversity. The success of many far-right anti-immigration parties in various elections is a clear symptom of a growing unease. Fears and prejudices may escalate to a social crisis across Europe if not properly addressed. A new initiative entitled "Reconciling diversity and cohesion in Europe: a human rights model to build inclusive and participatory societies in Europe" was launched on 15 November 2011 in Paris. In consultation with civil society, it will be further developed in the coming months.

18. Efforts to strengthen the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations as a United Nations soft-power tool for dialogue and peace continued through closer cooperation with non-State actors. That included special relations with the media community through the Global Experts platform, a network of non-governmental organizations, a growing number of corporations and foundations, representatives of religions and faith-based initiatives affiliated with the United Nations, and youth. The challenge is to bring that capacity and many relevant programmes closer to the places and issues to which they matter most.

19. Looking towards the future at the ongoing shifting global balance of power, it is evident that the Alliance should be able to contribute more to raise awareness about what it means to live in a landscape of differences and the necessary role of cross-cultural dialogue and exchange.

20. The expectation regarding an increased role by the Alliance as a United Nations soft-power tool was expressed at the General Assembly thematic debate on the theme "Fostering cross-cultural understanding for building peaceful and inclusive societies" on 22 March 2012, and included a new demand for a mediation role for the Alliance.

21. Also, at the Alliance's Doha Forum, which focused on the topic of culture, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue to foster sustainable development, a new range of demands related to the poverty-reduction agenda emerged.

22. As reflected in the third implementation plan, ensuring unity of purpose, coherence and consistency of action remains a considerable challenge for the Alliance and requires further thinking about what might be the most likely scenarios for its future development.

23. The sustainability issue was addressed during the reporting period. Acting on proposals by the High Representative, Turkey hosted a pledging conference — also known as the Partners Forum — from 31 May to 1 June 2012 in Istanbul, co-chaired by the Secretary-General, at which State and other non-State partners pledged $7.5 million.

24. Further consolidating and fully developing the new replenishment mechanism remains a main challenge for the near future. A reappraisal of priorities may be warranted, which would further underscore the matchmaking nature of the Alliance.

25. The important contribution of the Doha Forum must be highlighted. Generously hosted by Qatar, the Forum stood at the intersection of the development agenda and the Alliance's mission. It put on the table the notion of a new social contract that binds institutional and civil-society actors at the national and global levels, beyond and with their precious diversity. That broadening of perspectives will help the international community prepare for a post-2015 agenda. In addition, the Forum helped build support for existing programmes and new ideas, as is illustrated throughout the present report.

26. Preparations for the Fifth Forum in Vienna (27 and 28 February 2013) are under way as of early 2012. The Forum's overarching theme will be the promotion of responsible leadership in diversity and dialogue.

27. Against this general background, the present report provides specific updates on the Alliance community, its main activities and programmes, the Trust Fund and the outreach challenge.

III. Consolidating the Alliance of Civilizations as a global multi-stakeholder platform

28. The Alliance has a strong intergovernmental dimension, reflected in the Group of Friends. Yet it operates in a field in which progress depends on the contributions and choices of a great diversity of actors from all walks of life. It actively seeks to involve them in a vast platform of a wide range of stakeholders, which has now been set up as a Partners Assembly. The points below may be highlighted.

Group of Friends

29. After the fast and steady expansion of previous years, membership continues to grow more slowly, bringing the number of Group of Friends members to 133 (110 countries and 23 international organizations).[2]

30. The Group of Friends held its ministerial meeting in New York in September 2011, with the participation of the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly. It met at the level of Permanent Representatives in March 2012. Ministers and heads of international organizations or their representatives also met in five thematic round tables during the Doha Forum, providing guidance on key issues. Consultations also occurred through written communications and a wide range of bilateral contacts. Group of Friends members were notably invited to contribute suggestions for the third implementation plan (2011-2013), the agenda of the Doha Forum and the outline of the new replenishment mechanism.

31. The High Representative had a steady flow of contacts with several Group members, notably in the framework of the preparation of the first pledging conference. He held bilateral consultations with both sponsors (Istanbul in January 2012 and Madrid in March 2012) and paid official visits to Australia, Finland, Jordan, Montenegro, and Serbia.

32. The period was also marked by contacts with heads of international and regional organizations to strengthen synergies and secure the implementation of memorandums of understanding, as well as closer contacts with a number of foundations and the private sector.

Focal points

33. Members of the Group of Friends are invited to appoint focal points mandated to oversee implementation of the Alliance's goals at the national level, notably through national plans, and coordinate with the secretariat. By 30 June 2012, 79 countries and 22 international organizations had appointed focal points.

34. The Alliance ensured coordination of their efforts and exchanges by organizing the focal points' annual meeting at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Portugal back-to-back with the Lisbon Forum co-organized with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, and also by holding regular consultations. Focal points were further involved in various meetings focused on the elaboration of the Second Action Plan for the South-Eastern Europe Regional Strategy, held in Belgrade on 10 April 2012, as well as on the framework of the Regional Strategy for Latin America held in Lima. Regular consultations among them were also informally developed on a regional basis during the past 12 months.

Thematic platform

35. Based on a Swiss proposal, work continued to develop through thematic platforms, bringing together small groups of countries interested in further exploring specific themes and putting forward proposals for concerted action. That was mainly the case for a "humanitarian" platform, seeking to better understand and improve

[2] The following members joined the Group of Friends during the past 12 months: Brunei Darussalam, Iraq, Mongolia, the Union for the Mediterranean and the World Tourism Organization.

interaction between organizations of different faiths, as well as between secular and faith-inspired organizations in the field of humanitarian and development assistance. A survey of practices was made with about 100 non-governmental organizations. Findings were shared and discussed with them and the participating countries. Due to difficulties faced in generating enough support, however, it was decided to put this kind of approach on hold.

Civil-society component, including the private sector and philanthropies

36. The Alliance is a multi-stakeholder initiative. Its success depends on advocacy expertise, support and involvement of multiple actors at all levels. The Alliance constantly seeks to improve ways in which non-State actors can be better integrated into its activities, alongside and in cooperation with State actors.

37. Efforts were scaled up in order to build and/or consolidate networks targeting specific groups — youth, universities and researchers, think tanks and foundations, non-governmental organizations dealing with a range of cross-cultural issues, interfaith networks — and to set up partnerships involving the private sector.

38. Simultaneously, a search for integrated platforms continued. Following the first pre-forum organized in Qatar in May 2011, efforts to develop Alliance civil-society chapters at the regional and country level are ongoing. Civil-society initiatives and suggestions developed recently in Australia, Cameroon, China and India point in that direction.

39. Efforts were started to encourage the engagement of individuals in Alliance activism through campaigns, competitions and initiatives that call on personal participation. The Doha Forum promoted the concept of commitment to action, also applicable to individuals.

40. Public-private partnerships are playing an increasingly important role. They form the basis of concrete projects with a global dimension such as Dialogue Café, the Intercultural Innovation Award, summer schools and the "Do one thing for diversity and inclusion" campaign, all described in sections IV and V below.

41. The Alliance continued to collaborate closely with countries, agencies and non-governmental organizations, working on issues of interfaith dialogue and faith-based cooperation with a view to building on complementarities. That work included, in particular, engaging with the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and the Jordanian initiative for a World Interfaith Harmony Week. Contacts will now also be developed with the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, set up in Vienna in November 2011.

Partners Assembly

42. As part of the new replenishment mechanism, a Partners Assembly was set up with a diverse funding base made up of Governments, international organizations, foundations, corporations and individuals. The Partners Assembly will provide a framework where all types of donors can exchange views on the operations and effectiveness of the Alliance's Trust Fund when considering their future contributions. The Partners Assembly will also be consulted about the priorities and the strategic outlook of the Alliance, and will have the opportunity to make suggestions for new initiatives. The High Representative will expect to meet the

Partners Assembly as a whole on the occasion of the replenishment sessions and whenever required.

IV. Main initiatives and activities

43. During the reporting period, the Alliance developed its main activities in the fields of education, youth, media and migration around the following five key objectives: (a) facilitating global conversation on challenges and opportunities for living at ease in a landscape of diversities in our age of global communication and exchanges; (b) promoting changes in policy frameworks and intercultural strategies; (c) preventing intercultural tensions and crises, combating stereotypes, discrimination and xenophobia; (d) supporting innovative grass-roots initiatives that contribute to intercultural dialogue and understanding, mutual respect and cooperation across divides; and (e) raising awareness and mobilizing public support for cultural diversity, tolerance and inclusion. During the reporting period, a range of programmes and events were implemented. The most relevant initiatives are listed below.

A. National plans and regional strategies

44. National plans are the best process for taking ownership of the Alliance's goals at the country level. As at 30 June 2012, 27 States had adopted national plans and strategies: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Italy, Kuwait, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Some countries have issued second and third editions of national plans.

45. More plans are in preparation as part of a long-term gradual exercise to be carried out by countries at their own pace, using their own implementation channels. While not aiming at full-fledged plans, some countries develop important sets of measures on critical issues.

46. While the plans cannot be devised according to a single model, it is increasingly accepted that they express added ownership of the Alliance's goals and that in the long term they should include core measures and practices that represent minimum standards of good governance of cultural diversity. Cross-fertilization with the range of the Alliance's programmes would be an obvious advantage and would strengthen overall coherence.

47. The secretariat will need to find the necessary resources for more steady support for countries developing such plans and exchanges of experiences, but will also, critically, need to encourage countries in greater need of such measures to start on their plans with the involvement of civil society. It may also help such countries mobilize the expertise of international and regional organizations and draw on networks of experts.

Regional strategies

48. The Alliance has been calling on groups of countries facing common challenges to generate common actions in cooperation with civil society. That had been the case with the adoption in Sarajevo in December 2009 of a Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, followed in mid-2010 by a Plan of Action for its implementation. Similarly, work launched in Alexandria, Egypt, in early 2010 culminated in the adoption on 9 November 2010 in Valetta of a Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation for the Mediterranean. That led to the adoption in May 2011 of a first set of prioritized actions for implementation, which reflected the new context in the Middle East and North Africa region.

49. The funding of the two Plans of Action has admittedly been a problem, which is now being addressed under the new replenishment procedure. It will be an ongoing priority. In the meantime, a few projects and activities are under way in both cases. They include a history teaching project in South-Eastern Europe with the support of the European Association of History Educators, the Council of Europe and the Soros Institute, and various forms of sharing know-how and experiences in the Mediterranean, in particular in the fields of media, youth and the democratic structures of transition.

50. A strong political will led to the proposal of a second Regional Action Plan for South-Eastern Europe. Following a meeting in Belgrade in April 2012, the Plan under finalization encompasses a wide range of projects, aimed at addressing six priorities.

51. Based on an invitation by Peru, a draft Regional Strategy for Latin America has also been worked out and awaits ministerial approval in 2012, together with a Plan of Action, which will build on work carried out by regional and subregional organizations as well as civil-society partners, and will strengthen synergies with the Alliance's programmes.

52. Other regional initiatives are under consideration. Preliminary contacts have been made with Governments and/or civil-society partners in Asia, the South Pacific region and sub-Saharan Africa. They would not necessarily lead to full-fledged plans in the short term, but would be important steps in an interactive process. In some cases, they would benefit from an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development understanding that earmarked contributions to developmentally focused projects could be reported as bilateral aid in terms of eligibility for official development assistance.

B. Multi-stakeholder initiatives, including projects and programmes led mainly by the Alliance of Civilizations

53. A series of programmes have been developed by the Alliance and its partners in the four fields of action, in pursuit of the five broad objectives (see para. 43). They help deliver positive change for citizens in terms of respect, access and understanding in multicultural environments. They are based on suggestions contained in the High-level Group report but also on commitments made by different partners on the occasion of each Alliance Forum.

54. Many programmes reflect various forms of cooperation with partner international organizations, based on a network of memorandums of understanding

between the Alliance and the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Many also include contributions from non-governmental organizations, foundations and universities, or provide an umbrella to their initiatives, under the High Representative's vision: The Alliance can deliver only if you deliver with us. You are the Alliance.

Education field of action

55. From the outset, the Alliance has been concerned by the widespread mutual ignorance, fear and suspicion across cultures. It recognizes the critical role of education in helping build bridges and change perspectives. It also acknowledges that, in an area of substantial existing activity, its main role is to encourage constant adaptation of existing efforts, rather than to initiate a range of new activities. The Alliance maintains an academic network, which will develop synergies with the United Nations University International Institute.

Education about Religions and Beliefs platform

56. The Education about Religions and Beliefs online community has become a premier Internet resource on the issues concerning learning about diverse religions and beliefs. It kept expanding during the reporting period. With a network of 18 academic and civil-society partners spanning the globe, the community has also evolved into a platform for educational activities, a facilitator of discussions on the role of faith-based organizations and a synergizing agent for the Alliance in several respects.

57. The organization in Marrakech, Morocco, in February 2012 of the International Symposium on Education, Spirituality and Education for Human Flourishing is a good illustration of the potential of the platform for well-informed debates and policy recommendations.

Media literacy

58. The Alliance continued to develop several media literacy initiatives to help young people and citizens navigate an increasingly complex media world and provide them with tools to become discerning and critical media users and producers, an essential condition for better mutual understanding. The Alliance has joined forces with UNESCO and further developed the Media and Literacy Clearinghouse into a global reference in the field of media education. The joint publication of the Alliance, the European Commission and UNESCO, *Mapping Media Education Policies in the World*, has been translated into Japanese by Hosei University in Tokyo.

59. The joint Alliance-UNESCO University Network on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue had its first conference in June 2011 in Fez, Morocco, establishing the framework of the Global University Chair. A second meeting took place in May 2012 at the University Autonoma of Barcelona, Spain, where the Alliance, UNESCO and eight universities (from Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Jamaica, Morocco, Spain and the United States of America) presented the first outputs of the network.

Encouraging constant adaptation of education policies and backing pioneering efforts

60. The Doha Forum provided several opportunities to explore the role of education in reducing misperceptions and allowing for constructive intercultural interactions. Workshops provided recommendations on mainstreaming the acquisition of intercultural skills, or developing new higher-education programmes to help public-service professionals manage diversity. Follow-up work is under way.

61. The Doha Forum also addressed the role of teaching history in conflict transformation, with representatives from the European Association of History Educators, the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture and the Council of Europe, and ministers or senior experts from different countries with relevant experience. One of the many recommendations is that the Alliance should support pilot actions in the framework of its regional strategies, which it already does in South-Eastern Europe.

Living together at ease in diversity: the Alliance of Civilizations' summer schools

62. The Alliance summer schools are based on the conviction that youth are a driving force for change. In addition, a central principle behind the summer school is that people share more commonalities than divisive differences, and when given the opportunity, they will explore those common interests, sparking collaborations and stimulating ideas that address major issues around the world.

63. The objectives of the summer school are to (a) promote the empowerment of youth by strengthening intercultural skills and competencies; (b) strengthen young people's capacity to get involved in the preparation and implementation of cooperative action across divides; (c) facilitate encounters and exchanges among youth from around the world; and (d) develop a network of participants.

64. The week-long boarding summer school design is based on a process of mutual learning, using the participants' varied experiences as a starting point for training and learning processes. Active participation and in-depth reflection are key components of the course, which combines formal and informal educational opportunities. Participants compare their approaches to work and participation as young leaders in increasingly diverse societies, preparing them to become agents of change when they return to their own communities.

65. The 2011 summer school was hosted by Lisbon University as a result of a consortium of partners, namely the League of Arab States, the Euro-Mediterranean University, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, the Gulbenkian Foundation, the Aga Khan Network for Development and a range of companies. It gathered close to 100 youth aged 18 to 30, ensuring geographical, cultural and gender balances.

66. In 2012, three summer schools are planned, in Coimbra, Portugal, in August, with 135 participants from more than 60 countries; in Malta during the first week of September; and in Turkey in late September.

Youth field of action

67. Deeply aware that youth are agents of change and a source of innovative ideas, the Alliance recognizes them as autonomous actors and partners in building more inclusive and equitable societies. It takes steps to foster their participation, supports

their most promising initiatives and promotes exchange programmes. An expanding one-stop youth website backs the process.

68. In the context of the Doha Forum, strong youth participation was again fostered by a youth preparatory event. One of its by-products was the launch of a youth campaign calling on political leaders and citizens to speak out against fear, intolerance and xenophobia.

Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations

69. Further to the First Convention of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations, which took place in Baku in April 2011, the Alliance and the leaders of the Movement have been working throughout the year on the finalization of its charter and the terms of reference. Final steps are expected in 2013, enabling the initiative to move forward.

Youth Solidarity Fund

70. The Youth Solidarity Fund is an international small-grants programme which provides seed funding of up to $30,000 to youth organizations advancing intercultural and interfaith dialogue at local, national, regional or international levels. Projects funded under the programme are developed and implemented in their entirety by youth organizations.

71. As the result of the two Youth Solidarity Fund editions in 2008 and 2010, 24 projects were funded and more than 150,000 individuals, mostly youth, benefited from their activities. To assess the results and impact of project activities, as well as ensure greater sustainability of projects, the Alliance organized a three-day capacity-building training for the Youth Solidarity Fund winners in Nairobi in March 2012. One of the exciting outcomes of the training was the launch of an alumni network to provide guidance and mentorship to the future winners of the Youth Solidarity Fund beyond 2012, subject to more funds being channelled to the Trust Fund.

Other developments

72. The Alliance continued to take an active part in the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, which aims to increase the effectiveness of United Nations work in youth development. It joined a working group on drafting an action plan to deepen the youth focus of United Nations programmes, as instructed by the Secretary-General.

73. On 22 March 2012, the General Assembly and the Alliance hosted a high-profile and extremely well-attended thematic debate on the theme "Fostering cross-cultural understanding for building peaceful and inclusive societies". Young people figured prominently in the discussions.

Media field of action

Media Programme, formerly referred to as Rapid Response Media Mechanism

74. The media programme focuses on amplifying the constructive role of media in furthering public understanding of divisive debates. To that end, it is concerned with increasing the access of media professionals to expert commentary to ensure a diversity of voices and free quality content; creating opportunities for journalists to

enhance their skills through training; and providing media empowerment trainings to academics, civil-society and opinion leaders, and marginalized or stereotyped communities. The programme facilitates a conversation on best practices in the media industry. It has continuously expanded since its inception to address the growing needs of both media and grass-roots communities.

Global Experts

75. The Global Experts online resource (available from theglobalexperts.org) was relaunched in April 2012 with a range of new services, including a more refined search tool for experts and a more interactive interface for expert nominations and article submissions. The database of experts itself has continued to grow. The resource numbers 400 experts, from academics to civil-society leaders and youth. Each expert generates several media impressions weekly, and around 12 to 15 media alerts are sent every month to thousands of journalists around the world. In July 2012, Global Experts will launch its first Alliance mobile application, which will enable journalists to search experts on their mobile devices according to expertise, location and language.

Syndication of articles and article series and partnership-based multimedia projects

76. Building on past article series ("Religion and the public space", May 2011) that reached more than 2 million readers through worldwide syndication, a new article series was devoted in March 2012 to the role(s) of youth in democratic changes. Articles were published in 15 newspapers.

77. The online resource continues to aggregate commentary by experts from media outlets around the world, while also featuring exclusive content produced by experts for the site in the form of articles, podcasts and video interviews. The articles are then sent to a network of 80 editors worldwide that publish the material through free syndication.

78. The project has also secured a wide range of partnerships to produce content, including, in particular, a partnership with the British Council and the University of Missouri School of Journalism to produce the first multimedia project on the theme "Journeys of belonging", illustrating the complex interplay of multilayered identities through 110 unique video testimonials of public figures and young leaders. In 2011, 100 videos were produced on the theme "100 questions about Islam" and were disseminated globally to summer schools, universities and media professionals.

Training of journalists and training of civil-society and opinion leaders

79. The media programme regularly creates opportunities for journalists to enhance their skills through training sessions with and exposure to media professionals from other parts of the world. Fewer opportunities arose this year owing to funding constraints. The media programme notably partnered with the *New York Times* Knowledge Network and provided a six-week online training course by *New York Times* journalists to Tunisian, Egyptian, French and American journalists on election coverage. Discussions are under way with prominent training institutes to multiply cross-cultural training in the months ahead.

80. In addition, the programme aims to train civil-society and opinion leaders and provide skills to best handle media opportunities. Building on successful experiments in 2010 and 2011, notably in the United Kingdom, it currently discusses collaboration with new partners in that respect.

Meeting of television owners

81. Following a meeting of television owners and managers at the Dead Sea in Jordan in October 2011, the media programme convened a dozen media managers at the Doha Forum to discuss the topic of the Secretary-General's international agenda, off the record. The media programme continues to grow in its role of facilitator of private meetings of editors, owners, managers and educators to discuss key issues regarding the role of media and the future of journalism.

General collaboration in the media field: incendiary narratives

82. A dialogue occurred between the alliance and the European Union regarding media communication in the field of prevention and radicalization, specifically on countering incendiary narratives on all sides. The Alliance shared with the European Network of Experts on Radicalization insights on its own experience in organizing skills-building workshops for journalists in Indonesia, Pakistan, the United States, Europe and the Arab world to explore the role of media in addressing tensions across communities. The Alliance has also brought to bear its experience in the area of counter-narrative programming and at-risk youth empowerment projects in various policy-setting conversations, including with actors in East Africa, Central Asia, and South and South-East Asia. The Alliance plans to embark on a new set of programmes in this area, with a focus on Pakistan and Somalia.

Migration/integration field of action

83. In a world of porous borders and globalized economies, diverse populations increasingly interact through continued migration. How that dynamic is portrayed in the media, discussed in the political and cultural arena and managed by policymakers determines whether societies view increased diversity as a source of strength or as a threat. The Alliance's contribution focuses on the identification and sharing of promising public policies and civil-society initiatives relating to the integration of migrants and to the narrative on migration.

Sharing knowledge: Online Community on Migration and Integration

84. The website "Online Community on Migration and Integration — Building Inclusive Societies" (IBIS) (available from unaoc.org/ibis), launched in May 2010, has two main aims: to highlight successful models of integration of migrants in order to counter polarizing speech and stereotypes, and to encourage the replication of these models in different contexts, while promoting further involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. Throughout 2011, the online community kept enhancing its potential, in particular by expanding its outreach and network of partners.

85. In May 2012, after two years of implementation, the Alliance carried out an evaluation of the website and decided that improvements were needed in structure and design. Work is under way with a view to deliver an improved version by the end of 2012.

Contributing to shaping of policies and promotion of promising practices

86. As a perfectible platform for exchange of knowledge and proposals, IBIS is the main Alliance resource for the preparation of inputs into a variety of national and international efforts. This is notably the case in respect of the preparatory work for the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which will be held by the General Assembly during its sixty-eighth session, in 2013.

87. The knowledge, networks and discussions aggregated by IBIS are also brought to bear in a regional initiative of the High Representative entitled: "Reconciling diversity and cohesion: a human rights model to build inclusive and participatory societies in European countries", described in the overview of progress.

88. In addition, the Alliance was a partner in a number of events that promoted more inclusive societies. Examples include an international seminar co-organized in Melbourne, Australia, with Deakin University on diversity, citizenship and social inclusion (October 2011); a new meeting on the theme, "The inter-ethnic city", co-organized in New York with the Permanent Mission of Italy, with the participation of all relevant United Nations agencies, key countries, experts and civil-society representatives (September 2011); and meetings organized by the International Organization for Migration in Helsinki and New York on better communication for better integration.

Media and migration

89. A team of experts and journalists has been assembled to prepare workshops aimed at enhancing media communication about migration. Some of the workshops will take place in the context of the Fifth Forum in Vienna (February 2013), where the issue will figure prominently.

C. Other cross-cutting initiatives

PLURAL+ youth video festival

90. The Alliance, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration, further developed PLURAL+, a youth video festival on migration, diversity and social inclusion, which recognizes youth as powerful agents of social change in a world too often characterized by intolerance. PLURAL+ has the support of many international partners. More than 400 videos have been received from 63 countries in the first three years.

91. Award-winning videos are being distributed on DVD, broadcast on television stations and the Internet and screened at video and film festivals and conferences around the world. PLURAL+ distribution outlets include RAI TV Education (Italy), United Nations Television and Video, COPEAM Forum, China India Forum Youth Festival, Havana Film Festival, Roots & Routes International Film Festival, the Royal Film Commission Jordan, Serbia Educational Media Festival, Televisión America Latina, Films without Borders Film Festival and Cine y Salud (Spain).

Intercultural Innovation Award/World Intercultural Facility for Innovation

92. The Intercultural Innovation Award selects and supports the most innovative grass-roots projects that encourage intercultural dialogue and cooperation around

the world. A competitive process ensures that projects are selected for their outstanding achievements and potential to expand to other contexts. Winners become members of the World Intercultural Facility for Innovation, drawing up to one year of support and consulting from the Alliance and the BMW Group. The programme helps winners become more efficient and expand while enabling their transfer to other contexts where they might be relevant. Through connecting these initiatives to policymakers, potential donors and the media, the Alliance and the BMW Group aim to significantly increase their impact.

93. Ten organizations among more than 400 applications from 70 countries were acknowledged at an awards ceremony held at the Doha Forum. Winners came from different regions and fields of work and included the Middle East Justice and Development Initiative (Palestine/Israel), the Maytree Foundation (Canada), Cafebabel.com (Europe), Vaga Lume Association (Brazil), Chirom e...Chino (Italy), All for Peace Radio Station (Palestine), Kickfair (Germany), Irenia (Spain), Amara-Universal Subtitles (United States) and Youth Empowering Parents (Canada).

94. The World Intercultural Facility for Innovation team has started working with the 10 organizations and is at the stage of replicating some of their innovative ideas. For example, 18 organizations from eight countries are interested in adapting to their cities the winner project "DiverseCity onBoard" from the Maytree Foundation and the Middle East Justice and Development Initiative has started operating in Egypt and Turkey; it will operate in Jordan and Spain in mid-2012.

95. The BMW Group has announced its strengthened commitment to the project for at least the next two years.

Fellowship programme

96. In September 2009, the Alliance launched its fellowship programme, aimed at facilitating exposure for emerging leaders from North America, Europe, and Muslim-majority countries to media, culture, politics, institutions, civil society and religion in one another's countries and generating knowledge exchange, understanding and productive partnerships across borders. In the long run, the Alliance aims to create a network of emerging leaders who will bring fresh perspectives to relations between the different countries and regions and advocate new approaches.

97. After two successful pilot editions in 2010 and 2011, the fellowship programme is now developed on a biannual frequency. It is supported financially by Germany and Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace and developed in partnership with the British Council, the League of Arab States, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Qatar Committee of the Alliance of Civilizations and the Institute of International Education in the United States. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Government of Jordan have also become partners as at 2012. The early-2012 edition brought emerging leaders from the United States and Europe to Morocco, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

98. The Arab Spring has brought even greater relevance to the programme, as it provides a unique opportunity for emerging leaders to learn from and connect with their peers. A meeting of alumni will take place in early 2013 to develop joint initiatives and collaboration.

Promoting a global conversation: network of Dialogue Cafés

99. Dialogue Café is a non-profit initiative that uses cutting-edge, videoconferencing technology to enable face-to-face conversations between diverse groups of people from around the world. It allows them to create a global community for sharing experiences, learning from each other and working together to make the world a better place. Dialogue Cafés are already open in Paris; Lisbon; Amsterdam; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Cleveland, United States; and Ramallah. London; Beirut; Wroclaw, Poland; and São Paulo in Brazil are scheduled to open in 2012. New Dialogue Cafés in Tunisia; Belgrade; Lagos, Nigeria; and Brisbane in Australia are in the pipeline and will all be operational by mid-2013.

100. Expanding the network of Dialogue Cafés to three strategic areas is a priority for 2012-2013: Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Senegal); South Asia (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan); South-Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean region (Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, Montenegro, Morocco, Romania, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey). Twenty new Dialogue Cafés are being considered.

V. The Fourth Global Forum, Doha, December 2011

101. The Forum continued to be the towering event of the year, as it brought together 2,500 representatives from all constituencies to expand the global conversation on a main theme, review progress on ongoing activities and launch new cooperative efforts to foster cross-cultural understanding. At the invitation of Qatar, the Fourth Alliance of Civilizations Forum was held in Doha from 11 to 13 December 2011. It focused on the role of culture, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue to foster sustainable development.

102. Intercultural trust was seen both as a condition and a result of equitable development. More than 50 sessions and workshops explored ways to boost intercultural dialogue through improved education, better protection of minorities, more enlightening tourism, better cultural industries, changing narratives, greater youth participation and enhanced individual responsibility.

103. As a result, the High Representative noted the emergence of a broader concept of sustainable development, which would include a cultural diversity pillar. He suggested that the Alliance might need to prioritize additional actions in regions where achievement of the Millennium Development Goals may be boosted through addressing prejudices and discrimination, which are drivers for exclusion, tension and conflict.

104. A number of new projects were listed and announcements made at the end of the Forum, either as extensions of existing activities (more summer schools, additional Dialogue Cafés, extended fellowship programmes, scaling up the "Do one thing for diversity and inclusion" campaign, following up on the "Reconciling diversity and cohesion" launch, more easily reachable Global Experts), or as new proposals (an Alliance film festival in Shanghai, a possible Alliance observatory, various corporate initiatives).

105. The Fifth Forum in Vienna (27-28 February 2013) will focus on the theme, "Promoting responsible leadership in diversity and dialogue". A concept note is under preparation for submission to consultations of the Group of Friends

(ministerial meeting on 28 September 2012), as well as to a number of other relevant partners.

VI. Outreach

106. The Alliance's multifarious outreach and communications efforts are driven by a wide range of projects and initiatives that focus on promoting cross-cultural dialogue in different corners of the world. They include global campaigns on diversity, small grants targeting grass-roots initiatives, holding journalist training sessions and engaging media owners and editors, supporting youth initiatives, facilitating exchanges among young leaders and, most of all, the annual Forum, which many describe as the premier cross-cultural event of the year.

107. Beyond this, there is direct communication with and outreach to the media through press releases, newsletters and media alerts. Media training sessions and the Global Experts resource offer additional ways to engage media professionals.

108. This year's "Do one thing" campaign, a social media project to celebrate the United Nations World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development on 21 May, also merits special mention. The campaign's Facebook posts targeted nearly 4 million individuals through the network that was created. In addition, the accompanying Twitter campaign made 7.3 million impressions (tweets received by people) and had a reach of 3 million people (who potentially saw those tweets).

109. On the technical side, the main Alliance website, UNAOC.org is an essential vehicle for raising the Alliance's visibility. Its traffic has increased by nearly 25 per cent in the past year, most of it by completely new visitors. The Alliance's outreach through social media also continued apace, including a more than fourfold increase in the number of people visiting the main site through Facebook and a near tripling of its Twitter followers in the last 12 months.

110. In spite of the aforementioned gains, there are many areas of improvement in outreach from which the organization might benefit as a whole. More practically, the Alliance would benefit tremendously from having support from an outside communications agency or an internal team that is dedicated solely to the task of giving the organization greater visibility.

VII. Governance: replenishment mechanism for the Trust Fund and the secretariat

Setting up a voluntary replenishment mechanism for the Trust Fund

111. In spite of a steady expansion of the Alliance's role and activities, the resources at its disposal continued to be significantly limited compared to the target level, erratic and almost impossible to predict. For the 2011 budget year, actual expenditures had to be kept in the range of $4 million, against a modest target of $5.15 million.

112. The High Representative therefore proposed a funding model based on periodic replenishments, designed to increase the predictability of the Trust Fund's resources, to diversify the array of donors by enlarging it to the private sector and philanthropy and to secure funding for the Alliance's activities well in advance. He

further proposed an innovative mechanism of consultation with the community of donors, whether public or private.

113. The first replenishment session took place in Istanbul, Turkey from 31 May to 1 June 2012, at the initiative of the Prime Minister of Turkey, who co-chaired the event with the Secretary-General. Some 70 countries, 15 international organizations and a number of corporate and foundation partners attended. The session secured pledges for $7.5 million, below a more ambitious target but still a clear improvement in terms of volume and forecast. A second session will be held in the context of the Fifth Forum in Vienna in February 2013. A revised 2012 budget and a draft 2013 budget will be prepared by the secretariat in September 2012.

The secretariat

114. A deep imbalance persisted between the set of tasks or programmes and the human resources of the secretariat. They will not suffice in the longer run. Helpfully, fresh secondments were pledged at the Partners' Forum. More will be sought, with a view to securing a better cultural balance. Funds earmarked for programmes may help ease the overall situation.

115. The secretariat will continue to regularly review and improve the match between priorities and staff allocation and critically revisit the need for any programme to be carried out by the team, rather than partners. The selection of a new Director for the secretariat is under way.

VIII. Conclusions

116. The past year brought to light a number of challenges faced by the Alliance as a result of its growth over the past five years. Furthermore, they raise the question of whether the Alliance has reached the limits of its capacity within the light framework in which it was set up and developed.

117. At first glance, over the past five years the Alliance has managed to:

(a) Become a well-recognized and credible United Nations platform for intercultural dialogue and cooperation in spite of its sui generis nature and status that make it different but complementary to any other United Nations agency, as well as to other intergovernmental organizations;

(b) Profile itself as an emerging soft-power tool aimed at addressing our growing difficulties of living together, listening to each other and respecting each other by means of fighting against ignorance, deconstructing stereotypes and misconceptions that deepen patterns of hostility and mistrust and developing a culture of dialogue, tolerance, justice, human rights and human dignity;

(c) Reach out to civil society, grass-roots organizations and ordinary people in addition to the classic stakeholders as a bridge builder, convener and catalyst, helping to give impetus to innovative projects aimed at reducing polarization among nations and cultures through joint pursuits and mutually beneficial partnerships;

(d) Shape a coherent framework for the Alliance in spite of its growing diversity. Thanks to the vision developed and the strong commitment of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and of the two co-sponsors, political support for the Alliance

grew and enlarged its scope, expanded its network of partners around the world and developed a number of landmark actions.

118. Over the past five years, however, the Alliance has not yet managed to:

(a) Find its appropriate place within the United Nations system and develop full cooperation within the United Nations family by exploring its untapped resources and acting as a true horizontal soft-power tool. This means that a number of issues have to be clarified: how intercultural dialogue and cooperation can become an effective tool in the United Nations peacebuilding and conflict prevention agenda; how the Alliance's national plans and regional strategies can contribute in an effective way towards realizing human rights, dialogue, tolerance, democracy and human dignity; how intercultural dialogue and cooperation as prompted by the Alliance can help to boost sustainable peace and development, including the Millennium Development Goals; how the links between the Alliance and the United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy can be made more specific and practically driven;

(b) Reach an optimal institutional arrangement that allows the Alliance to be more rooted locally and ensure appropriate follow-up for its initiatives;

(c) Secure enough resources to implement actions on the ground, namely to expand and consolidate its flagship programmes and develop action plans around the two Regional Strategies adopted.

119. On the basis of these preliminary observations, the High Representative feels that it is his duty in the coming months to prepare a critical overview on the progress achieved by the Alliance in implementing its mission during the past five years, and to develop possible scenarios for its future evolution in order to cope with the main challenges it faces in a world shaped by rising tensions and uncertainties.